

Beealeraght

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Ayns y tourey cheau mee shiaghtin ayns balley beg çheerey 'syn Ellan Skianagh enmyssit Floadigiarree. She ynnyd braew aalin t'ayn eddyr ny crink as y keayn, lesh ymmodee ellanyn beggey mygeayrt-y-mysh er dagh çheu. Ta'n thaloo messoil ass towse kyndagh rish yn ooir ghowin volcanagh ta çhymysaghey ayns lhigg eddyr ny cronganyn injil ta ry gheddyn noon as noal fud y valley. Ta'n ooir shen gleashagh dy kinjagh as t'eh rait dy vel yn slane ynnyd yn skyrraghtyn-thalloon smoo 'syn Oarpey: shegin daue jannoo yn raad trooid y valley ass y noa keayrt ny jees dagh blein.

She Gaelg Albinagh çhengey ny mayrey ec y chooid smoo jeh'n vooinjer, ga dy re yn feallagh shinney smoo ta loayrt ee 'sy laa t'ayn jiu. Ta ymmodee dy leih aegey faagail yn balley, as joarreeyn berçhagh Baarlagh çheet stiagh dy chummal ayn: yn un skeeal cheddin dy chooilley voayl. Ta ram croityn foast goll 'sy valley, ga nagh vel ad jannoo wheesh dy eirinnys orroo as v'ad cliaghtey ve jannoo: cha nel ayn agh kirree nish as cha row booa goll er blieaun 'sy valley rish ny smoo na feed blein. Va mee ayn marish scoillaryn elley veih dy chooilley ard dy Nalbin cour scoill-houree Ghaelgagh, as hooar shin turrys mygeayrt y valley marish shenn ghoooinney enmyssit Archie. V'eh myr dy beagh oo goll mygeayrt Creneash ny smoo na keead blein er dy henney marish Ned Beg Hom Ruy...er-lhimmey dy row eh markiaght er quad-bike! V'eh ginsh dooin mychione aght-beaghee ny heirinnee as ooilley enmyn ny crink as ny buill elley mygeayrt. Va ennym er-lheh echey er dy chooilley chorneil jeh'n valley.

V'eh mie er baghtal dy chlashtyn glare Ghaelgagh cha floaoil as cha berçhagh as shegin goaill greme er caa myr shoh son s'coan my vees ynnyd myr shen ry gheddyn ayns kuse dy vleeantyn, cha tappee as ta'n Ghaelg goll kione ny lhie ayns dy chooilley voayl. Ta mooinjer Floadigiarree jannoo lheid y choorse da ynseydee daa cheayrt 'sy vlein, agh oddagh ram baljyn elley ayns ellanyn Nalbin goaill vondeish er y vian t'ec sleih ta gynsaghey yn ghlare dy ve marish sleih ta loayrt Gaelg dy dooghysagha. Veagh shen vondeishagh da mooinjer ny hynnydyn shen, da ynseydee, as da'n ghlare.

In the summer I spent a week in a village in Skye called Flodigarry. It is a very beautiful place between the hills and the sea, with many small islands around about on every side. The land is extremely fertile because of the deep volcanic soil which gathers in hollows between the low hills which are dotted throughout the township. This earth is always shifting and apparently the whole place is the largest landslide in Europe: they have to rebuild the road through the village a couple of times a year.

Scottish Gaelic is the mother tongue of the majority of the community, though it is mainly the older people who speak it nowadays. Many young people leave the village, and rich English-speaking incomers settle: the same story everywhere. There are still a lot of active crofts in the township, though they do not do as much crofting on them as they used to: now there are only sheep and there hasn't been a cow milked in the village for more than twenty years. I was there with students from across Scotland for a Gaelic summer school, as we had a tour around the village with an old man called Archie. It was as if you were going round Cregneash more than a hundred years ago with Ned Beg Hom Ruy...except that he rode on a quad-bike! He told us all about life as a crofter and all the names of the hills and other places. He had a particular name for every corner of the village.

It was very good to hear such fluent and rich Gaelic, and opportunities such as this need to be grasped for it seems unlikely that it will be possible to find places like this in a few years' time, so fast is the language declining everywhere. The people of Flodigarry do a course like this for learners twice a year but many other areas in the Hebrides could take advantage of the desire of learners to spend time with people who speak the language natively. That would be of benefit to the people of these places, to learners, and to the language.